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Capture of Louisburg

1745

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THE CAPTURE OF LOUISBURG IN 1745.

BY WILLIAM BRIGHAM, Esq.

Among the remarkable events that distinguish the history of New England, there is none more interesting than the seige and conquest of Louisburg in 1745. In boldness of conception, and in its fortunate issue, it has no parallel in the history of the country, and hardly in the history of the world. An event on which the very existence of New England seemed to depend, and which did so much to prepare the way for American independence, can never be regarded without interest. Strange it would be if we should forget what in that day every New England man called the most glorious of victories—what produced universal joy and thanksgiving throughout the land—what first taught us our own strength, and what gave the mother country some idea of the value and importance of her American colonies!

The island of Cape Breton, on which Louisburg is situated, constitutes, at present, a part of the Province of Nova Scotia. It is of triangular form, and about eighty leagues in circumference. Its western and northern shores are steep, rocky, and inaccessible, while its southeastern is indented with beautiful bays and harbors, commodious and safe for ships of the largest size. Its soil is broken and barren, and during a considerable portion of the year the island is either inveloped in fog or locked up with snow and ice. Its entire population at the present time does not exceed 30,000—most of whom are engaged in the fisheries, and in the coal and lumber trade.

There is nothing in the present appearance of the island which would give one unacquainted with its history any idea of its former importance, or which would account for the long continued struggle between Great Britain and France for its possession. Indeed, when we compare its present appearance with the glowing descriptions of former times of its fertility, wealth, and resources, we are almost made to doubt whether it is to this barren and bleak island that those conceptions were intended to apply. They bear but little semblance to truth, and were undoubtedly made in reference to its political importance at that time.

Its whole value in former times was owing to the political relations of Great Britain and France, or rather of their colonies in North America. Cape Breton and Nova Scotia seem to have been the seat of contention between these two powers for a century and a half, and their inhabi-

tants were several times compelled to take the oath of allegiance—sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other, till it became so uncertain to what nation they belonged that they were at length allowed the privileges of neutrality, and were commonly known as the neutral French.

The location of these places, as will appear by an inspection of the map, must convince any observer that a possession of them at that time would afford an immense advantage to either of the contending powers—an advantage arising not from any internal resources, but as a means of effecting their ultimate designs. While France had possession of the Canadas—the control of the navigation of the St. Laurence, and was largely engaged in the fisheries—it was necessary for their security that she should also have possession of the islands in that neighborhood. The bays and harbors which they afforded were necessary for the protection of her fishing vessels, her numerous privateers, and her increasing trade with Canada and the West Indies. The possession of these would render her dominions in North America safe, and enable her to accomplish her favorite plan of checking and restraining the growth and trade of the British American colonies. By the security which these places afforded, she was enabled to enlist and keep in her favor most of the northern and western Indians, and thereby extend her dominions not only through Canada and along the great lakes, but through the vast regions of the west, uniting her settlements in Canada with those on the Mississippi, and bringing both to an union of action to the forming of a barrier to the further extention of the English settlements.

On the other hand, by the possession of these places Great Britain could defeat the ambitious designs of France, protect her own colonies, and secure her trade against the constant depredations of the enemy.

This is the true reason why Nova Scotia and Cape Breton were formerly held in so high estimation—why millions of dollars were expended in their defence—why the strong fortifications at Port Royal and Annapolis Royal, and Louisburg were built, and why they were so frequently made the seat of war.

Of all the British American colonies none had so much reason to fear the ambitious designs of France as New England—none so much exposed—none so much engaged in the fisheries—and none so severely felt the depredations of the enemy on their commerce. No sooner was a war declared between Great Britain and France than the chief source of wealth at that time to New England was either cut off or put in imminent hazard. Their ships were taken by privateers, and

E198
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carried into French ports and judged lawful prize—their territory was invaded—their fortifications were attacked—their frontier settlements destroyed, and their own citizens were put to death, or carried into captivity.

Under these circumstances there grew up a deadly hostility between the French and English colonists. The old enmity, which is said to be natural between England and France, seemed to have acquired new virulence by being transplanted. This was much increased on the part of the English by the successful efforts of the French in acquiring the friendship of the Indians, who always had more sympathy with the flexible Jesuit than the stern Puritan. These sons of the forest, to the eternal disgrace of those who had their confidence, and who exercised over them a control, were always employed to act as pioneers in the work of death—to burn and desolate villages—to harass and distress the frontier settlements—to steal upon the innocent and unsuspecting inhabitants, putting them to death by the most inhuman tortures, or, what was perhaps still worse, carrying them into a bitter and hopeless captivity.

The constant attacks of the Canadian French and Indians upon the people of New England satisfied them that they had no security but in their suppression; hence the conquest of the French settlements at at the north was always a favorite scheme—hence recruits for this purpose were always easily obtained—hence severe laws against Catholics were enacted, which are often adduced as evidence of bigotry, but which in fact, like many other things of that day, were designed for the purposes of self-defence; for it should ever be remembered, that to the people of New England, Catholicism and French perfidy were then identical. It was in this spirit that the expeditions against Nova Scotia in 1690 originated in Massachusetts, when to her great honor, by her own enterprize and resources, she was able to effect an important conquest, and enlarge His Majesty's dominions.

It was not until after the close of Queen Ann's war that Cape Breton began to assume an important character. While this island and Nova Scotia were both in the possession of the French, the preference for trade was given to Nova Scotia. At the treaty of peace in 1713, Nova Scotia was ceded to Great Britain, while Cape Breton was retained by France, and from that day no pains or expense were spared by the French Government in building and strengthening its fortifications. At the southeasterly part of the island, at a place then known as the English harbor, they immediately commenced building a walled town, which, in honor of their King, they called Louisburg. The na-

tural position of the town was more favorable for defence than any other town in America. It was frequently called the "Dunkirk of America," for a description of it, I use the words of Dr. Belknap—"It was two miles and a half in circumference, fortified in every accessible point with a rampart of stone from thirty to thirty-six feet high, and a ditch eighty feet wide. A space of about two hundred yards was left without a rampart on the side next to the sea, and enclosed by a simple dike and pickets. The sea was so narrow at this place that it made only a narrow channel, inaccessable from its numerous reefs to any shipping whatever. On an island at the entrance of the harbor, which was only four hundred yards wide, was a battery of thirty cannon carrying twenty-eight pound shot, and at the bottom of the harbor directly opposite to the entrance, was the ground or royal battery of twenty-eight forty-two, and two eighteen pound cannon. On a high cliff opposite the island battery stood the light-house, and at the north-east part of the harbor was a magazine for naval stores.

"The town was regularly laid out in squares. The streets were broad, and the houses were built mostly of wood and stone. The entrance to the town was at the west gate over a draw-bridge, which was protected by a circular battery of sixteen twenty-four pound cannon."

These works had been twenty-five years in building, and, though not finished, had cost France not less than thirty millions of livres. It was in peace a safe retreat for the French ships bound homeward from the East and West Indies; and in war, a source of distress to the northern English colonies—its situation being extremely favorable for privateers to seize their fishing vessels, and interrupt their coasting and foreign trade, for which reasons the reduction of it is said to have been as desirable an object as that of Carthage ever was to the Romans.

Such was the place that the people of New England proposed to take by surprize in 1745. It was perhaps as impregnable as nature and art could make it, and was probably considered as safe by France then as Gibralter is by the English at the present day. Its reduction was suggested and accomplished by a train of circumstances as remarkable as the event was glorious. It was very properly said by a writer of the day, that "if in this expedition any one circumstance had taken a wrong turn on the French side, it must have miscarried."

France declared war against Great Britain on the 15th of March, 1744, and a declaration of a similar character was made by Great Britain a few days after, information of which did not arrive at Boston till the 31st of May, where two days after war was publicly proclaimed. By a fast sailing packet, the Commander of Cape Breton had heard of

the war nearly three weeks earlier, and though expressly directed by his Government not to alarm the English colonies, yet thinking he could derive great advantage by surprising them, immediately made an attack on Conso, a small fishing town on the southeasterly part of Nova Scotia, which, being wholly unprepared, surrendered, and the inhabitants were carried prisoners to Louisburg, and a large number of fishing vessels seized. Soon after he attacked Annapolis, which would have shared the same fate, and with it all Nova Scotia, had it not been for the timely arrival of some troops from Massachusetts, which were fortunately sent there for the protection of the fort against the Indians.

These early attacks awakened the colonies to a sense of their danger. It soon became apparent that the safety of Nova Scotia, and perhaps all the English settlements in North America, depended on the conquest of Cape Breton. It was well known that France was making formidable preparations for carrying on the war the following year, end the colonists were satisfied that whatever was done must be done quickly. There was not a moment to lose.

The prisoners taken at Conso in the spring and carried to Louisburg had been exchanged, and returned to Boston in the autumn. From them an accurate account of the strength and fortifications of Louisburg was obtained, thus rendering a service to their countrymen not unlike that of the prisoners within the walls of Troy. From this account, Sir William Shirley, then Governor of Massachusetts, conceived the idea of taking the city by surprise early in the spring, and before any aid could be obtained from France. In this he was supported and encouraged by a gentleman from New Hampshire named Vaughn, who was largely engaged in the fisheries, and who had received much information respecting the place from his own fishermen. Vaughn has claimed the honor of making the first suggestion of this to Shirley. Whether this be true or not it is now difficult to tell, but at any rate, he was a man of resolute character, and suggested several plans for carrying it into effect, one of which was to travel over the walls on the drifts of snow.

Governor Shirley immediately wrote to the ministry requesting aid the ensuing season without mentioning this particular expedition.—This he wished to keep a secret some time longer.

To obtain the opinion of the General Court upon this subject, he early in January requested its members to lay themselves under an oath of secrecy to receive from him an important proposition. This is said to have been the first request of the kind ever made to a legislative body in the colonies. It was complied with, and he communicated his

plan of attacking Louisburg, and asked for their consent. This was kept a secret from the public for a number of days, but it was at last discovered by an honest deacon, whose whole soul was so filled with the plan of the expedition that he inadvertently made mention of it at his family devotions by praying for its success. The boldness of the proposal at first astonished every one. It was referred to a committee, who reported against it. This report, after some debate, was accepted by a considerable majority, and it was generally supposed that the subject was put to rest.

The Governor, however, was not thus to be defeated. He let the subject remain a few days, when, through his own solicitation and influence, a petition from a number of merchants in Boston favoring the plan, was presented to the General Court. This was referred to another committee, who reported in its favor. This report was argued two whole days, during which time its advocates set forth the prospect of its success, and the advantages Massachusetts would receive from it—the importance of immediate action, and the strong probability, and almost certainty, that they would be amply remunerated by Parliament when it was known to His Majesty what proofs of loyalty his American subjects had given.

On the other side, it was argued with more plausibility, and with much greater reason, that the scheme was chimerical—that inexperienced militia could never reduce so impregnable a fortress—that by reason of fogs and ice the island could not be approached at that season of the year—that they should incur the displeasure of Parliament by such a rash undertaking—that the Province was exhausted by previous campaigns, and if this was unsuccessful it would prove its utter ruin.

The question was taken on the 26th of January, and the expedition was voted by a majority of a single vote—several members, who were known to be opposed to it, being absent. No sooner, however, was this done, than a degree of unanimity upon the subject generally prevailed, and those who had before opposed it, like true patriots, came forward and gave their aid to carry it into effect. Never were a people more enthusiastic, or entertained stronger hopes of success, than the people of Massachusetts at that time. Circular letters were immediately sent to the other colonies as far south as Pennsylvania, requesting their assistance. One of these, Vaughn, the resolute friend, if not the author of the expedition, carried by express to Portsmouth, where the Assembly of New Hampshire were then in session. They at once voted to aid in the enterprise, and for that purpose proposed to raise

three hundred men, and to furnish the Province sloop. The only difficulty which they met with, was the want of funds to pay the expense; but this was soon removed by issuing bills of credit—an expedient that was frequently adopted—though at this time contrary to the royal instructions.

Proclamation was soon made by Gov. Shirley, for raising the necessary forces, and means were taken for equipping the small fleet, then owned by the Province, for the purpose of convoying the troops. The Governor also sent to Commodore Warren, commanding the British fleet at the West Indies, requesting his aid,

The enlistments were soon filled up, and the next important step was the appointment of a commander-in-chief. This was attended with some difficulty, as they were raw soldiers, taken from all the New England Provinces, and feeling, in some degree, a jealousy of each others influence. The choice at length fell upon William Pepperell, of Kittery, then a Colonel of the malitia, and a merchant of good reputation, known extensively, both in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. A more judicious appointment could not have been made, for, though a merchant, yet he possessed much of the military character and spirit so common in that day, and was well fitted to command a militia of his own countrymen, composed almost exclusively of agriculturists and mechanics.

After he had been nominated to this office, and previous to its being confirmed by the General Court, Shirley, perhaps for the purpose of paying Gov. Wentworth, of New Hampshire, an empty compliment, and perhaps enlisting him more heartily in the cause, addressed him a letter in which he says, "it would have been an infinite satisfaction to me, and done great honor to the expedition, if your limbs would have permitted you to take the chief command;" undoubtedly supposing that the governor's gout would render such a proposition safe. But in this he was mistaken. Wentworth flung away his crutches and offered his services, and Shirley had the mortification, not only to make him a lame apology, but to tell him that any change in the command would hazard the expedition.

Before accepting the appointment, Pepperell consulted the famous George Whitfield, who was then travelling through New England, upon its expediency. Whitfield told him "he did not think the scheme very promising--that the eyes of all would be upon him—that if it should not succeed, the widows and orphans of the slain would reproach him—and if it should succeed, many would regard him with envy, and endeavor to eclipse his glory—that he ought, therefore, to go

with a single eye, and then he would find his strength proportioned to his necessity." After some hesitation, he gave a motto for the flag, which was *Nil desperandum Christo duce*, thereby giving the expedition the air of a crusade. It is said that a large number of the followers of Whittfield enlisted, and as a proof of the religious feeling by which they were actuated, one of them, a clergymen, carried upon his shoulder a hatchet for the purpose of destroying the images in the French churches.

Within eight weeks the provincial forces were raised, and the entire preparations for the expedition were made. The whole number of troops was about 4,300, of which Massachusetts raised 3,250, Connecticut 500, and New Hampshire and Rhode Island 300 each. None of the other provinces engaged in the enterprize, though New York lent ten eight-pound cannon, and Pennsylvania and New Jersey made contributions to defray the expenses. The naval force, and it was all, that New England could then furnish, consisted of only twelve ships, the largest of which was the Massachusetts Frigate which carried twenty guns. Of these Captain Edward Tyng, of Falmouth, was appointed Admiral. Captain Tyng had acquired great reputation by his having taken a French privateer the preceding year, for which exploit the merchants of Boston presented him with a silver cup weighing one hundred ounces, and bearing this inscription :

"To Edward Tyng, Esq. commander of the smack, Prince of Orange, as an acknowledgment of his good service done the trade by taking the first French privateer on the coast the 24th of June, 1744 ; this plate is presented by several merchants of Boston, in New England."

Some of these armed ships sailed as early as the middle of March, for the purpose of cruising before Louisburg, and seizing any of the enemy's ships that should attempt to enter that port. The rest of the fleet and the Massachusetts troops embarked on the 25th of March, at Nantucket—at that time the place where all such expeditions were fitted out.

The original plan of the expedition, as communicated by Shirley to Wentworth, and as appears from the instructions given to general Pepperell, do no great honor to the military skill, or the practical good sense of so enterprising a man. Its success was made to depend on things, that, if we reckon the possibility of chances, could never happen. For instance, the whole fleet, after sailing six hundred miles, was to appear before Louisburg at eight o'clock in the evening, and should land two miles below the town, which, it was supposed, would take till midnight ;

four hours more were allowed for arranging the respective troops, and in preparations for scaling the walls and making an attack on the city, which was to be made as early as four o'clock, or the plan of surprise would be defeated.

In this plan no calculation is made for adverse winds, which would disperse the fleet—for storms—for fogs—ice, or other impediments, but all were to arrive at a fixed hour—meet with no accident—go in unobserved, and to do the whole work in the darkness of the night. This was the plan of the bold projector, and had it been feasible, nothing could have been easier than victory. Perhaps it was no more absurd than various other plans that were then proposed. One was by a clergyman, who, to prevent disasters from subterraneous mines, proposed that two men should go in the night near the walls of Louisburg—that one should strike the ground with a beetle while the other should lay his ear to it for the purpose of discovering whether it was hollow, and if any places were suspected, to work them.

Another made a model of what he called a flying bridge, which was to be constructed of light materials, so that twenty men could carry it on their shoulders, and erect it against any part of the wall. He supposed that the whole army could pass over it in twenty minutes, and that in this way they could get into the midst of the city before they were discovered.

Another proposed to go over the walls by ladders, and agreeable to his plan a large number was made and carried in the expedition ; but as ill luck would have it, they were made about ten feet too short.

Among other preparations, and as a proof of the strong hopes of success which all entertained, one of the officers provided himself with a dress which he intended to wear when the command of the town was given to him.

The fleet, after a prosperous voyage of eleven days, arrived at Conso. It was impossible to enter Chopporouge bay, where they intended to land, on account of the ice. This continued to obstruct them for three weeks. On the day of their sailing from Nantucket, Gov. Shirly received an answer from Commodore Warren, declining to aid in the expedition, as it was an affair of the Province. This he wisely kept a secret for a time.

The New Hampshire troops arrived at Conso four days earlier than those from Massachusetts, and those from Connecticut about twenty days later. While they were impatiently waiting here for the ice to be removed, to the great joy of the whole army Commodore Warren arrived from the West Indies with his fleet. Just after his answer to

Shirley declining aid, he received instructions from the ministry to repair to Boston, and consult with Gov. Shirley for his Majesty's general service in America, and already knowing his designs, and the importance of immediate action, he sailed directly for Conso instead of first going to Boston.

Such unexpected aid inspired the army with courage, and made them even more sanguine of success. The ice being removed, the whole army sailed for Louisburg on the 29th of April, a distance of sixty miles, where they intended to arrive in the evening, wishing so far to carry into effect the original plan of surprise. But the wind dying away, they did not arrive before the town until the following morning at eight o'clock. This was the first notice that the inhabitants of Louisburg had of the intended invasion. They had discovered the cruisers a number of days before, but supposed them to be privateers. This seems almost incredible, when we consider that the expedition had been publicly known in the colonies for three months, and that the army and fleet had been in sight of St. Peters, a town in Cape Breton, for three weeks. It is a fact that shows clearly how great a change has taken place within ninety years in the transmission of news, and in our intercourse with the Canadian provinces.

An alarm was immediately given from the town by the ringing of bells, and the discharge of cannon. A detachment of one hundred and fifty men was sent directly to prevent their landing. They were soon repulsed by the brave New Englanders, who made all possible dispatch in getting on shore, and landing their military stores. They landed at a place four or five miles below the city, and on the following night the intrepid Vaughn, at the head of about four hundred soldiers, marched through the woods round the hills to the northeast part of the harbor, and burned the ware houses, containing a large quantity of naval stores, and staved a great number of casks of wine and brandy.

The wine carried the smoke from these burning buildings directly to the grand or royal battery, which was about a mile distant; and the garrison there, supposing that the whole army would soon be upon them, spiked their cannon, threw their powder into a well, took down their flag, and fled.

The next morning, Vaughn on his return in company with thirteen men, not knowing what was done, crept to the top of a hill which overlooked the grand battery, for the purpose of learning something of its situation and strength. He was surprised to see that the flag was gone and that no smoke issued from the chimnies of the barracks. He

hired one of his party, a Cape Cod Indian, with a bottle of brandy, which he had in his pocket, though his biographer tells us he never drank spirituous liquors, to creep into the fort and open the gate.—When this was done, and he had taken possession, he wrote Gen. Pepperill in these words: "May it please your honor to be informed that by the grace of God, and the courage of thirteen men, I entered the royal battery about nine o'clock, and am waiting for a reinforcement and a flag." It was thought proper, however, to provide a substitute for a flag at once, and accordingly one of the soldiers with a red coat in his teeth, mounted the flag staff, and nailed it upon the top. The French soon discovered their mistake, and sent one hundred men in haste to retake the battery. Vaughn with his small band, and amidst the fire from the city, alone upon the open beach, resited their landing for some time till he was reinforced, when the French retired and left the English in the undisputed possession of the battery.

The acquisition of this battery afforded the New Englanders great advantage in their subsequent operations against the city. It not only deprived the French of a strong hold, but afforded their enemies a place of security, and put into their possession a number of large cannon, of which they were much in need, and which did great service during the siege. They found here twenty-eight forty-two pound cannon, beside a large number of balls, shells, and other munitions of war. It was from this place that they made the most effectual attacks upon the island battery and the town. On the 7th of May a flag of truce was sent to the town with a summons to surrender, to which the commander in-chief returned that, he had no answer to make but by the mouth of the cannon.

After this it was determined to pursue the siege with greater vigor. The harbor was blockaded by the fleet, which was under the entire command of Com. Warren, and which had been farther reinforced by the arrival of some ships of war from England. The fleet had now become formidable, and were able to keep from the city all aid from abroad. It was still thought unsafe to enter the harbor on account of the strong fortress of the enemy on the island at its mouth. Under cover of the fog and in the night, other batteries were built by the New Englanders, very near the entrance to the town, which was supplied by cannon, which they dragged across a deep morass, before supposed to be impassable. These cannon were put on sledges, and with straps over their shoulders, the men with incredible labor, sinking all the time in the mud, got them over.

The 15th of June being the anniversary of his majesty's accession to the throne, it was thought by the loyal troops that no higher mark of respect could be shown their king than a new and more vigorous attack upon the town. Accordingly it was ordered to have a general discharge of cannon from all the batteries at 12 o'clock. This was done, and the fire continued during the whole day, which resulted in the demolition of a part of the wall of the town, and the destruction of a portion of the island battery. This satisfied the French commander that he could not sustain the siege much longer. The next morning Duchomhon, sent a truce, requesting a suspension of hostilties, till he had time to consider the terms of capitulation. This was granted, and three days after, the 17th of June, just 30 years previous to the battle of Bunker Hill, this strong fortress, with its garrison of 2000 men were surrendered, and to the English was given undisputed possession.

It is a well known fact, that many of those who fought here so valiantly for their country were found contending for the same cause at the battle of Bunker Hill. A service of thirty years had not damped their spirits or abated their ardor. Things had changed—a whole generation had passed away—yet they were spared, and feeling as they did, the same patriotic zeal, which burned in their bosoms while before the walls of Louisburg, it was their peculiar privilege to again rally round the standard of their country at the opening of the Revolution, and to signify their devotion to that cause by pouring out their blood.

The whole loss of the enemy during the siege was about three hundred; while that of the English did not exceed one hundred killed by the enemy, and thirty died of sickness. The surrender was probably hastened by the exaggerated account which the French had received of the strength of the English, and by the capture of the Vigilant, a Frenh ship of 64 guns a few days before; which by depriving them of all hope of relief from abroad, threw dismay into the whole garrison. Thus after a siege of forty-nine days, this strong fortress, by the aid of the skilful and courageous Warren, fell into the hands of the New Englanders. Everything seemed to conspire for their success. The weather was unusually mild and pleasant—the army was free from sickness—supplies came regularly at hand, their naval forces were unexpectedly increased, and on all sides fortune was propitious. When they had entered the town and examined its walls, its batteries and fortifications, none failed to express his surprise, at their success and to feel in some degree alarmed at their rashness. One of the officers declared "that if the French had not giving up Louisburg they might

have attempted to storm it with the same prospect of success, that the devils might have stormed heaven."

The siege was undoubtedly carried on in rather an irregular manner. Douglas compares it to a Cambridge commencement, with what degree of truth it is now difficult to tell—though in its noise, bustle and frolics it might have borne some resemblance to that holiday, as it was once observed. Belknap tells us "that during the siege, some might be found on duty at the trenches; others were racing, wrestling, and pitching quoits, or running after shot from the enemy's guns, which were sent back to the city. Many of the enemy's balls were stopped by the soldiers before they had gone their distance. During the siege no less than 9000 cannon balls and six hundred shells were flung into the city; a fact that proves that the sports in which they were engaged were not altogether idle, but such as became American soldiers, and such as will ever delight brave men, contending for the safety of their own firesides, and their country's political existence.

No sooner was the surrender made, than a feeling of jealousy became apparent between Pepperill and Warren. It became a grave question to whom the key of the city should be delivered. Warren intimated, if he did not claim superiority on account of his holding his commission from the English Government; while that of Pepperell was from the Province—a superiority, that was afterwards for the like reason frequently claimed by the British officers, and as often resisted by the Americans. Pepperell on the other hand was aware that the expedition originated in the colonies, and was carried on at their expense, and that to them the honor was principally due, and therefore like a faithful servant he was determined to sustain their honor by taking command of the city. He accordingly wrote to Duchomhon, that he should send a colonel to take possession. This was before the terms of capitulation had been signed, and no doubt earlier than he had a right to give such notice, if he had complied strictly with the rules of war. This brought a reply from Warren, in which he tells Pepperill that he had taken an improper step, "and that he was sorry to find by his letter a kind of jealousy which he thought he could never conceive of him. This affair, however, passed off without any difficulty, and the key was delivered to Pepperill, who afterwards brought it to Boston.

After the surrender a messenger was immediately dispatched to Boston, informing the people of the glorious result. In the mean time General Pepperill thought proper to celebrate it by a public dinner given to the land and naval officers. All attended and with joyful and

thankful hearts partook of the bounties set before them. Previous to sitting down to the table—it being understood that the Rev. Samuel Moody, of York—Chaplain to Pepperill's regiment, would be called upon to crave a blessing—much anxiety was expressed, lest be should disgust the guests by a long and prolix performance, for which he was notorious; and it was even suggested to some of the friends of the reverend gentleman, that he should be informed that brevity would be acceptable. But they fearing his irritable temper kept silent. The time came, and all were happily disappointed—for the chaplain, instead of following his usual course, performed his service in the most laconic manner, by saying with a feeling heart, in substance, that we had so many things to thank God for, that time would be infinitely too short to do it—we must, therefore leave it for the work of eternity.

The news of this victory arrived at Boston on the third of July. The effects which it produced are well described in a letter from Doctor Chaney to Gen. Pepperill, dated the following day. He says the "people of Boston, before sunrise, were as thick about the streets as on an election day, and a pleasing joy visibly sat on the countenance of every man you met with."

"We had last night," he continues, "the finest illumination I ever beheld with my eyes. I believe there was not a house in the town, in no by-way, lane or alley, but joy might be seen through its windows. The night was also made joyful by bonfires, fire-works and all other external tokens of rejoicing. Besides this, an entertainment was given to the people—a thing not unusual in that day on occasions of public rejoicing." Not long since I saw a bill paid by the State to the town of Boston for celebrating the reduction of Quebec by the English in 1759, and I mention it as showing the peculiarities of the times, which consisted of charges for a large number of tar barrels, and other combustible materials, that composed a great bonfire on Beacon hill.—Among these charges, was one item—"for 28 gallons of rum for the people." The celebration of the victory at Louisburg being one of an extraordinary character, the people were regaled with wine, which was placed on the common, in open vessels, where every one could help himself, and drown his own sorrows in potent libations, drank for his country's honor.

The 18th of July was observed throughout the Commonwealth as a day of thanksgiving for this event; and if we may credit the accounts of the times, it was universally observed in a manner becoming a people who saw in it the hand of an overruling Providence. Dr. Prince preached a sermon on that occasion at the "Old South," which was

printed, and is one of the best accounts of the enterprize now extant. It exhibits more freely than any other, the religious feeling of those engaged in it. When they embarked, he tells us, their language to their friends, whom they were about leaving, was "pray for us, and we will fight for you." After narrating the most remarkable events in the enterprise, he closes his discourse in this somewhat extravagant language: "Let us rejoice not only in our own salvation—the salvation of all our colonies, and some of the most important branches of the British trade, but let our joy rise higher, that hereby a great support of anti-christian power is taken away, and the visible kingdom of Christ enlarged. Methinks when the southern gates of Louisburg were opened, and our army with their banners were marching in—the gates were lifted up and the king of glory went in with them."

Nor was this victory less acceptable to a great majority of the people of England. National pride as well as paternal sympathy prompted it. A gentleman, residing in England, wrote to his friend in Boston, under date July 17th, as follows: "I hope the news of Cape Breton's being taken will prove true. Mr. Kilby has represented your government in so favorable a light to the Court, that instead of beholding you with jealousy and contempt, as they once did; it is almost as much as any man's character is worth to be an enemy to the present establishlishment. You are now styled as the glorious New England men, who have not only releived and saved his Majesty's Government at Annapolis Royal, but have recoved out of the enemy's hands one of their strongest fortressess, and a place of the utmost consequence to the trade of the kingdom, as well as protection to the Northern English colonies.

The journals on both sides of the water were filled with compliments to the New Englanders. Their enterprise and skill were lauded, not only from the pulpit and in private circles, but from public associations and institutions. Their bravery was the inspiring theme of all the poets of the day, who celebrated their virtues in a thousand patriotic and national songs. Their enterprise gave new vigor to the war: on the one hand by encouraging Great Britain, in connexion with the colonies, to attempt the entire conquest of Canada, and on the other, by inducing France to make more formidable preparations for defence.

Notwithstanding this expression of joy among the people of England, yet the course pursued by that Government, subsequently, did not do justice to the claims of New England. A policy began to be developed which eventually led to the Revolution, and which would have hastened that glorious period thirty years, had the colonies been able to

enforce their just claims. To some, the truth of this remark may be doubted, yet I think the history of the country proves conclusively, that the wrongs redressed in the Revolution had origin at a long period anterior to the date of the "Stamp Act." They are seen in the restrictions on our trade—in the suppression of our manufactures—in the declaration that the making of a hat or a pick-axe in the colonies was a nuisance, and in the wish too often expressed in high places, to perpetuate French power in North America to keep the colonies in dependence on the mother country.

It soon became apparent that every exertion was making to ascribe all the glory of this victory to the fleet. Whether this was designed, as an excuse for not indemnifying the colonies for the expense, or arose from an unwillingness to acknowledge their services, or from an ignorance of them, it is difficult to tell. The latter is the most charitable construction; and if we can judge from the deplorable ignorance of the real condition of the colonies, which existed at a subsequent period in England, this would appear the most probable. Their attempts were highly resisted in New England, and every means was taken to counteract them. Gov. Shirley, at the request of the General Court, repaired to Louisburg, and prepared an accurate account of the siege, which by their order was published. An agent was sent to England to represent their claims to that Government, and to obtain an indemnity. The feeling which existed in Massachusetts when it was reported what claims Warren made, will appear by an extract from a letter from Dr. Chauncey to Gen. Pepperill. He says, "it is highly resented by every New Englandman in Boston, that Mr. Warren should pretend to assume the Government of Louisburg. Your best friends wish that you had insisted on the pre-eminence due to you and the troops under your command, so as never to have given up the capitulation if it had not been conceeded to."

Then follows his opinion of the right of an English naval officer over the fleet of the colonies. "If the High Admiral of England," he continues, "had been there he would not have had the least right to command any where, but on his own ships"—a sentiment that was then universal in New England, and shows clearly what relation they supposed they sustained to the mother country.

The efforts of Massachusetts in vindication of the honor of her troops were in some degree successful. General Pepperill received from the king the honor of knighthood. Parliament after the expiration of four years voted an indemnity to Massachusetts and New Hampshire of £200,000 sterling. This was paid in silver and copper. Of the

silver, there were 215 chests, and 100 of copper, all of which made twenty-seven cart loads. It afforded great relief to the Province, which had become completely exhausted, and was then deluged with a loose depreciated paper currency. This remuneration, however acceptable it proved, was not what the Provinces had a right to expect. It fell far below the actual expense, which is said to have been about £500,000 sterling, and was not more than one third of what the English government actually received from the French taken at Louisburgh, a part of which came to those who were the real authors of the expedition, and by whose bravery and skill, it proved successful. It came too, after a long solicitation, and in the form rather of a bounty than a payment of a just debt—and not until the Provinces had had the mortification of seeing the fruits of this victory exchanged for the purchase of a place in Europe, and the only conquest in the whole, nor of any value, giving up to secure to the English Government her German possessions. It came not till the interest of New England had been most shamefully disregarded; and their old enemies had been permitted to get possession of Louisburgh again to prey upon their commerce and again to excite the savages to hostility.

For all her sacrifices—for all her noble exertions in the cause of the British nation, this was the only remuneration New England received. Not an officer of the army, excepting the commander, received any mark of distinction from that government. Their only reward, and the best that a patriot can receive, was a conciousness of having done service to their country, and of having acquired renewed strength in the conflict for her defence. For nine years, New England had been engaged in the wars of Great Britain with Spain and France, during which time she had lost in her various expeditions to Canada, Cape Breton, Carthagena, and the West Indies, seven thousand of her bravest sons; she had contributed her wealth—loaded herself with an immense debt, and spared no sacrifices to promote the success and glory of the British arms. Yet, notwithstanding all this—notwithstanding her repeated remonstrances, she was left at the close of the war deprived of a territory, which she had by her own exertions twice conquered, surrounded by the same enemies that she had once vanquished, and exposed to a renewal of the same conflicts and trials through which she had so gloriously and triumphantly passed.

In whatever view we regard the expedition to Louisburgh, whether as the work of a brave and patriotic people, or as constituting a new era in the policy of the mother country towards the colonies, it is full of interest. The chief honor of it belongs to Massachusetts, and it

will ever form one of the brightest pages in her history. It was conceived and carried through with a spirit worthy the descendants of the Pilgrims—worthy a people whose whole existence has been one constant struggle for the maintenance of their rights, and worthy the ancestors of those who gave independence to this country.

It was the work of a people whose loyalty to their King had never been shaken; whose devotion to their country was their highest possession. It has lost none of its brilliancy by the lapse of nearly a century—the rapid succession of remarkable exploits which have since adorned our history—which have consecrated other grounds, and raised us from colonial vassalage to national independence. While we value this independence and respect those by whom it was achieved: while we feel a veneration for the fields where it was maintained, and the men, who fell in its defence, we shall never forget to render due honor to the Province Militia, who battered down the walls of Louisburgh and drove the enemy from his strongest fortress.

TO A BIRD.

O first and sweetest of spring's early birds,
Whose rapturous warblings quiver from yon spray,
What thoughts of joy, beyond all reach of words
Gush with the voice that tunes thy fiery lay!
Hark, how the blissful language seems to say
All happy tidings of new-spring flowers,
Of nursing sunbeams mix'd with kindly showers
And balmier airs to soothe the gladsome day,
And all is glorious hope of summer nigh,—
The hill-side broider'd seems with fresher charms,
The breeze that quickens and the beam that warms
Float with thy voice athwart the tranced sky;—
Sing on, glad prophet, woods and fields again
And human hearts rejoicing hail thy strain.

? G. Lunt

ORATION

Delivered before the Philodemic Society of Georgetown College, on the 63d Anniversary of American Independence, by Oliver A. Luckett, of Georgia.

Gentlemen and Fellow-Students: Justice to my own feelings, independent of other considerations, would prompt me to express to you my deep sense of the honor your partiality has conferred. To discharge, however, in a satisfactory manner, the duty which has been imposed, is a task fraught with many and serious difficulties. Others, who have preceded me in this honorable station have gleaned every thing which could please or instruct. They have left no point untouched, no question unargued, no principle unexamined. Strengthened, however, by the consciousness that the welfare of your association has ever been with me a leading consideration, and cheered on by the approving looks of those who have honored us with their company, I proceed with pleasure and confidence to the performance of the task which your kindness has assigned me.

The occasion which has assembled us here is one sanctified by custom. It is the birth-day of Freedom. Throughout every portion of our wide, extended land, the watch-fires of patriotism have been rekindled. The recollection of scenes long since acted—of deeds long since performed, and of hardships long since endured, has gathered together a mighty family of freemen, who, animated by a remembrance of the past, look forward with pleasure to the future. Such, Fellow-Students, was the manifestation of a people's gratitude years ago, such it is now, and such will it be, as long as that people shall reverence and respect the memories of their departed benefactors. The American Revolution, the result of which was the liberty of an entire nation, had its origin in principles co-eval with the free exercise of our natural and unquestionable rights. The spirit of religious persecution which had obtained a permanent footing in the mother country, lead to the accomplishment of a bold and hazardous design. The position was assumed, that whenever the obstinacy of Government comes in collision with opinions reached by the slow, but certain process of reflection, and most especially, when such obstinacy clashes with religious opinions, which it is calculated to subvert, it becomes the oppressed to throw aside considerations, which under different circumstances, might induce them to pursue a line of conduct *purely* pacific, and adopt such measures, as in their judgment, may tend more directly to reach the object, which

they have in view. Such were the grounds taken with determination, and maintained with success, by our Pilgrim Fathers. Basing the justice of the step which was about to be adopted, upon the assumption that all civil governments are detrimental and injurious, which afford assistance to one portion of the governed by withdrawing it from another, they carried into execution a project, grand in itself, and beneficial to society. The ocean with its waves rolling mountain high, presented no terrors to them,—the furious tempests laden with death and destruction intimidated them not; for the soil which they claimed as their own, had discarded them, and the Government which they had often assisted in defending from imminent peril, was hurling against them the anathemas of its wrath and indignation. Sorrowful, but not discouraged, they left the land of their nativity,—bade adieu to friends and relatives, and severed the ties of connexion which bound them to Great Britain. The elements conspired to destroy them, but he who conducted the Israelites through the desert protected likewise this exiled band of patriots from danger and destruction. They sustained themselves with christian fortitude, amidst the many difficulties which surrounded them, inspired mutual confidence by their example, and after a long and tedious voyage, landed at Plymouth, thankful to that Being who had attended them in adversity, who had encouraged them in prosperity, and who had finally brought them to the spot of their destination. Honored men! The brilliancy of your undertaking, and the success with which it was prosecuted, will immortalize your names,—and not until the fair fabric of human liberty shall have been crushed beneath the irresistible strides of time, will the claim which you have so justly acquired to our gratitude, be impaired.

No sooner had the first settlers reached the western wilderness, than order sprang out of confusion. Industry and improvement changed the whole nature of things, and that which before was but the hunting ground of the savage, became the seat of commerce and enterprise.—The click of the hammer resounded where nought but the yell of the Indian, or the howl of the panther had been heard,—cities beautiful and magnificent, arose to mark the progress of civilization,—temples dedicated to the service of the living God, supplanted the savage wigwam, and the unsophisticated child of the forest was taught to respect *ceremonies*, the nature of which he could not understand. The prosperity of the settlers could not be concealed from England. They had emigrated thence—they had left behind them their homes and friends; they delighted, therefore, to further the interests of the mother country,—to establish for her in the wilds of America, a sure means by which she

might be benefitted, and to receive in turn the expression of her pleasure and approbation. Many were the bands of joyful individuals, who sanguine of emolument in the new world, took their leave of the old, and many were the obstacles which threatened to damp their energy and their spirits. Overcoming all, however, they established themselves permanently in the western hemisphere,—laid the foundation of a great and glorious system of Government, and secured to themselves the esteem and good will of many European powers. It should be borne in mind, that up to the passage of the Stamp Act, the colonies maintained the authority of the Crown on this side of the waters, and evinced at all times, a determination to defend the interests of Great Britain, even at the sacrifice of their own. The French war in America gave them an opportunity to exhibit their devotion. Burning with a love for the honor of their native soil, and infuriated by the audacity of their opponents, they united as *one man*, to repel the agression or die honorably in the attempt. We are all acquainted with the success which attended their arms. History has kept fresh upon her pages, the many hazards they ran, the many dangers they encountered, the many difficulties they overcame, in support of what was considered at that time to be, a claim founded in strict justice. In fact, it may be safely averred, that had they not seconded the movements, asserted the authority, and sustained the right of the British Government, the case would have proved hopeless, and France, whose capital had been entered by Henry V. of England, would have remained mistress of the New World.

But the time was fast approaching when the ties of consanguinity were to be severed. The crisis was one of those replete with interest to all, because in it, the welfare of all was involved. We will take a rapid glance at the causes which brought it about, and pass on to other subjects which demand our attention. The mother country (in a spirit which reflects but little credit either upon her wisdom or humanity) jealous of the growing prosperity of those whom it should have been her delight to assist, and desirous of replenishing her exhausted treasury, by any means, however base and illegal, levied a heavy and enormous tax, which was to be drawn from the pockets of the colonists. It seems that the question of power was confounded with that of right.—The Ministry feigning a belief that the power to tax was not wanting, concluded that the right to do so, followed as a matter of course. But in this they were deceived. There is a vast—an immense, difference between the power to do a thing, and the right to exercise that power and this was maintained eloquently, but unsuccessfully, by Pitt, Burke, and others of the English Parliament. The misguided Ministry, dead

to every feeling of generosity, listened not to the voice of reason, but impelled and actuated by motives of selfishness, assumed a hostile and belligerant position. They thought that the Americans would yield to the mandate of Parliament; they believed that the colonists would tamely submit to any measure however *degrading*. But, Gentlemen, they were mistaken. Our patriotic sires foresaw, that, if the principle upon which Great Britain wished to tax them was once admitted, their liberty would be snatched from them—their property would be subjected to the jurisdiction of a foreign power, and they themselves would become the pliant tools of despotism. It was not the pecuniary loss which they dreaded, for by their industry they could remedy it, but it was the grounds upon which the tax was levied, that they resisted and finally overcame. It was the principle that they combatted, and with reason too, for had they once granted its validity or justice, their doom would have been sealed. All this our ancestors knew, and knowing it they were determined to take issue upon the point, to return protests for menaces, to present shield for shield, and man for man. When intelligence of the steps which had been taken by the British Ministry, reached the venerable Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the greatest indignation was manifested by all. The young, and the old, the rich and the poor were equally affected. All plainly perceived, that a deadly blow had been aimed at their rights,—that the Government to which they were accustomed to look up for protection and assistance, had not only deserted them, but had attacked their dearest interests, and, as was to be expected, each individual resented the insult which had been levelled against millions. Nor were there wanting men whose knowledge of the point in question, gave to their sentiments and opinions due weight among the people. The Press labored under the burden of matter which was designed to present the subject in its true and real color. The whole talent of the country was called into action.—The most able and argumentative appeals were daily circulated, and their effect was in every manner flattering. Nor did eloquence exercise an inconsiderable influence. Orators, whose theme was liberty and its blessing, addressed the eager multitude, pointed out to them the nature of the contest about to be waged, and implored them to sacrifice every thing, rather than yield up one iota of the rights which they had secured in the face of insurmountable hardships and grievances. Poetry, too, contributed her assistance; the spirit breathed into the poetical effusions of the day, gives evidence of the just detestation with which the schemes of tyranny were regarded, and demonstrates the high value which was placed upon freedom and its enjoyments.

The chain which had united England and her colonies was broken. The last hope of reconciliation had passed away, and war was inevitable. The implements of agriculture were thrown aside,—opposition was proclaimed,—the mother country was defied to the combat, and her jurisdiction was boldly questioned. Lexington witnessed the first scene of contention. There the first blood flowed in defence of American Liberty. The contest at Bunker's Hill followed shortly after. The people became encouraged, and placing their confidence in Heaven vowed enmity to their common foe. Virginia—the Lacedemon of America, came to the rescue of her sister colony. The House of Burgesses passed resolutions, condemnatory of the steps which the parent State had taken, and altogether favorable to a national revolt. Patrick Henry, the forest-born Demosthenes, roused his fellow-citizens to resistance,—animated the desponding,—encouraged the timid, and fired the souls of all with indignation and contempt for that power which would have made them slaves. This spirit was not limited to Massachusetts and Virginia. It spread with the rapidity of thought throughout every portion of the country, and every where was adopted the sterling motto "to do or die." Measures were speedily taken to meet the crisis. The colonial Congress assembled, and the result of their deliberations was the document you have just heard read.

From that moment the aspect of affairs was purely warlike. There was a point at issue which involved the happiness and liberty of the colonies, and since peace could not be obtained by honorable means, they were determined not to purchase it by national degradation. The sword was made the arbiter, and the blessing of Heaven was invoked upon the side of justice, against tyranny and oppression. Need I tell you, Fellow-students, how nobly your forefathers conducted themselves; how ably they battled for the blessings which we now enjoy, and how successfully they terminated a contest, which had been waged upon the ground of principle? Need I point you to the battles which they fought—to the victories which they achieved—to the honors which they won, and to the benefits which they secured to themselves and their posterity? Need I speak to you of Lexington and Bunker's Hill—of the Brandywine and Saratoga—of Valley Forge and Yorktown? Need I tell you how your sires fought, and bled, and died, how they staked their lives, fortunes, and sacred honors upon the issue,—how they bared their bosoms to the shock of war, how they endured fatigue, overcame difficulties, and subdued the haughty spirit of a foe, that wished to bind them with the chains of slavery? Your own knowledge of these things would seem to preclude the necessity of my

rehearsing them, and yet the tale is one which can never tire. Suffice it to observe, that led on by their Washington, under the approving smile of Heaven, they toiled amidst hardships which would have broken the energies of any other men, and finally, after a contest of seven years duration, obtained an acknowledgment of their independence, from that very nation which had hoped to crush them.

Antiquity presents to our view the daring exploit of a Leonidas, who with a chosen band of 300, drove back the armed myriads of mercenary slaves, but it was reserved for the historian of the 18th century, to record the revolt and success of a few weak colonies against the mightiest power on the globe. When many of the kingdoms and empires which stand at the present day, shall have been numbered with the things that were, and when the ravages of time shall have laid waste all that is beautiful and magnificent, the heroism of our fathers will continue fresh in the minds of mankind, and their bravery and valor will incite the oppressed of future times to strike for their freedom. Millions yet unborn,—nations yet ungenerated, will meet years hence, as we do now, to commemorate the patriotism, expatiate upon the virtues, and eulogize the exploits of the sainted martyrs, who fell during the American Revolution. Our own happy country may experience the effects of faction—that bane of all Governments—and her institutions which we delight to venerate, on account of their intrinsic worth, may pass down to the ignominous grave of oblivion, but the fame of our Fathers shall live after them, and their glory will be as imperishable, as their actions were honorable and beneficial. Of that heroic band who achieved our independence, how few alas! are there now amongst us. Here and there, perhaps, may be discovered some aged veteran, whose silvered locks and emaciated frame, indicate the workings of time, and who, like the forrest oak, which has weathered the shock of the tempest, stands as a monument of former valor and greatness. One by one, have they silently departed to that "bourne, from which no traveller ever can return," and e're many years shall have gone by the last of the Spartan champions will be no more. No stone marks the spot where many of them lie; no monument tells of the place where their earthly remains have been deposited; no marble points to the urn which contains their ashes. Their deeds are green in the recollection of their countrymen, their actions are carved in indelible characters upon the hearts of freemen, and there they will ever remain, as long as time shall be. But there is a question connected with the surviving heroes of the Revolution which cannot be passed over in silence. It has been asserted that the government which they were instrumental in establishing, has fail-

ed to provide for them the necessary means of subsistence.* We have seen no refutation of this charge, and it is consequently entitled to our belief. And has it come to this, that the American Nation has left pennyless and breadless, the few remaining men who poured out their blood like water for the rights and immunities which it is our good fortune to possess? Where, let me ask, is that unbounded liberality which should characterize the action of Republics in particular? Where is that manifestation of gratitude due to those especially, who quailed not beneath the terrors of contention, who stept forward in the hour of peril to battle for themselves and for posterity, and who finally succeeded in emancipating millions. Let this matter be looked to. Let the protecting hand of Government be extended to the poor and needy of the Revolutionary champions who are yet amongst us; for as sure as we permit them to spend their few remaining years in poverty and want, as sure as we turn a deaf ear to their supplications for aid and assistance, so sure shall we bring upon our own heads the just censure, the unequivocal and merited disapprobation of the whole civilized world.

In our zeal to venerate the memories and laud the achievements of those of our own land who boldly girded on the sword of war, let us not forget the praiseworthy actions of foreign patriots who made common cause with us, in defence of principles, which have a co-existence with human liberty in every portion of the earth. Ireland, whose head has been bowed to the dust,and whose sources of wealth have been dried up by the avaricious and domineering spirit of England, afforded to the American colonies the first martyr to trans-atlantic cruelty, who was willing, nay, anxious, to die in defence of his adopted country. Montgomery, burning with a desire to signalize himself in the contest which was going on between the mother country and her rebellious offspring, bade adieu to the pleasures of opulence, and came to abide with an unknown but generous-hearted people. His great skill in military operations obtained for him the confidence, respect, and admiration of all, and the heights of Abraham, which were watered by his blood, will ever stand as a monument of his unconquerable bravery. He was truly a disinterested patriot. The cause of humanity found in him an able

*I am under the impression that Congress has passed an act, providing for the Revolutionary heroes, whose claims can be satisfactorily established. Be this as it may, there are many disabled and aged men, who have bled for their country, and who are without pensions. The officers of the Government have, therefore failed in their duty, and the act of Congress has not been carried into operation.

advocate, and like the heroic Grecian who fell victorious in the arms of death

> "He is Freedom's now and fame's,
> One of the few the immortal names,
> That were not born to die."

His bones are resting in the great emporium of America;—New York claims and enjoys the honor of containing all that is earthly of our national benefactor. Let her forever pride herself upon it for it is a treasure richer and brighter by far than any which ambition or avarice could confer. Nor was Poland backward in furnishing champions, who battled valiantly, shoulder to shoulder with our Sumpters, our Marions, and our Greenes. Pulaski and Kosciusko nobly volunteered to assist in winning for a foreign nation, that liberty, which the strong arm of depotism had broken down in their own. They fought hand in hand with our own sires, underwent the same dangers, and overcame the same obstacles. It is not for us to question the purity of their intentions. They were not contending for themselves, but for a people who only knew them in the history of their wrongs. They could not have looked, therefore, for personal aggrandizement. They were only desirous to establish for the oppressed of all climes, an asylum to which they might flee in time of danger and peril. How far they succeeded we leave it for the hardy band of foreigners who have penetrated the wilds of our Western domain, and who have made themselves opulent and happy; we leave it for them to answer. But there is another—into to mention whom would be sacriligious. He was a gallant stranger who left the blushing vineyards of his happy France. He was no mercenary, who followed war as a trade—who adored avarice as a God, and who sought to plunder for gain and emolument. He was a high-minded man, whom the oppression of a distant county fired with indignation. He burned with a holy desire to battle for the weak against the strong, and boldly planned the passage of the boisterous ocean, which rolled between him and the people whom he wished to assist.—Surrounded by companions youthful and buoyant, and sprung like himself from an honored stock—courted by Kings and idolized by Courts—endowed with every accomplishment which could render life agreeable, he might have passed his days in the sunshine of peace and happiness; but all this he threw aside, preferring the tented field and its dangers, to royality and its pleasures. He came Fellow-students to avert danger from your rebellious ancestors. Nor did he arrive after the battle "had been fought and won." When he landed on our shores the dark cloud of uncertainty was hanging upon the minds of all, and the

s outest hearts began to tremble with apprehensions for the fate of the Americans. He clothed the naked, fed the hungry, animated the desponding and gave a new course to the contest which was going on.—He stood amongst us during the long and doubtful struggle, was present at the closing scene of the Revolution, became an intimate friend of General Washington, was highly honored by Congress, and after the independence which he had assisted in securing, was established upon a permanent basis, he returned to his native country, in order to assist in quelling the disorders, which were shaking her to her very centre. Not many years ago he re-visited the soil which had been wrested from the grasp of the invaders, partly by his own wonderful exertions. But he found us not as he had left us.—He found us a great and growing Republic, honored and respected by all the nations of the earth; he had left us an infant struggling against unnumbered dangers and difficulties. What must have been the feelings of this great and good man to witness the mighty changes which had been effected! Around him prosperity and happiness reigned. Here where immense forests had stood to mock the energies of man, beautiful cities had sprung up, and there where the beasts of the wilderness had inhabited, commerce and agriculture were in successful operation. There was but one thing to mar the pleasure, which the occasion was calculated to produce. Lincoln and Greene, and Knox and Hamilton, his brothers in arms were not here to salute him. They had fallen before the only enemy which they were unable to meet. All that was earthly of them had been gathered to the tomb, but their bright spirits were looking down from the abodes of happiness, upon the partaker of their troubles. Above all the father of his country was no more. The scythe of the reaper had mowed him down, and his ashes were resting in peace upon the banks of his own Potomac. The popular demonstrations of gratitude, however, consoled the Nation's guest for the absence of old and venerated friends. Wherever he went, whatever portion of the land he visited, the deepest love and respect were manifested by all —the sons and daughters of those whose dangers he had shared, came forward to thank him,—the humblest as well as the highest extended to him the hand of hospitality,—the National Legislature were mindful of his past services, and the whole country from Maine to Louisiana, resounded with the grateful cry, "welcome, welcome La Fayette!"

It becomes us particularly, on an occasion like the present, to take a view of the system of government under which we live, to examine some of the means by which it may subsist, to see some of the evils by which it may be destroyed, and to glance at the existing state of our

country. The form of government which our ancestors succeeded in establishing, and which has been transmitted to us by their united wisdom and courage, possesses qualities common to no other form upon the face of the globe. There may be, it is true, others which present exterior grandeur and magnificence, designed to dazzle and deceive but they will not bear the test of rigid scrutiny. Splendor is all they possess. Real happiness, which it should be the end of every government to confer, can no where be discovered, and if we tear away the veil which conceals interior deformities, we shall be struck with dismay, at the vice and corruption which will present itself to our view. The Republican system is calculated above all others, to bestow universal happiness and prosperity. It opens to all the doors which lead to wealth; it grants to all equal competition, it extends to all the same blessings, it holds out to all the same rewards, and prepares for all the same punishments. Since it places every citizen upon a perfect equality, in a political point of view, and since it protects all in the enjoyment of their civil and religious rights, it cannot be otherwise than beneficial in its results. Republics, in the language of Mr. Hume,* are the nurseries of science. Monarchies are the hot-beds of ignorance; for in the former, the mind is permittted to examine without restraint, every principle which may impart efficacy or weakness, which may generate ruinous or beneficial consequences to Society; whilst in the latter, it is forced to act within a prescribed and limited sphere. But if Republics are thus happily the only governments where *freedom* in the full sense of the word exists, they are also more subject than any others to the outbreakings of passions, which in the end prove disastrous. Despotisms are seldom or ever endangered by the just fury of those whom they oppress. In fact, the tyranny which is practiced, becomes, as it were, *natural* to those, who feel its effects, and the effort required to throw it off, is considered in the light of a burdensome task, instead of a sacred and solemn duty. Believe me, one of the chief defences of a Republic is the education of its citizens. Education and oppression are diametrically opposed. It is not a matter of surprise, that some barbarous nations have yielded, without striking a single blow, or that others have bartered their liberty for gold. The reason is, they were untaught; they could not appreciate the precious boon of freedom; they knew not the value of the treasure which was lost to them forever. Experience teaches us that a people *must know* their rights, before they will undertake to *defend them*. Education should therefore be a common blessing

*See Hume's Universal History.

enjoyed by every one. All should be endowed, in particular, with a knowledge of their own coun try,—with a knowledge of the ground which it occupies,—with a knowlege of the benefits which it bestows, —with a knowledge of the character of those who framed it, and of those who have the direction of its affairs in their hands,—with a knowledge of the importance which its success or failure will exercise upon the whole civilized world,—and most especially with a knowledge of its constitution and laws. Let all learn well the history of their own country, and afterwards, in order to have a due conception of the most salutary means by which its prosperity may be enhanced, let them drink deep from the fountain of antiquity. It is pleasing to see that all the States have taken a right view of the subject, and animated by the liveliest desires, have given to education its due weight and influence. All of them have, under the most flattering auspices, established what is termed the Common School fund, and many of them have taken the proper steps to introduce and encourage a love for the fine arts. This is as it should be;—it argues well for the judgment and wisdom of the State Legislatures, and is a pleasing earnest of future success. Intimately connected with education, there is another requisite, indispensable for the well-being of all Governments, but particularly that of Republics. That requisite is virtue. The frame of the State is like of the human body, it requires certain operations for its increase and growth. Whenever the body becomes affected by disease, there is need of medicinal application, in order that it may be restored to its former sanity; thus Government needs to be cleansed from the multifarious evils which may seize upon it, in order that it may re-occupy the station of soundness and health—from which disease,—political disease, I mean, had thrown it. Luxury, avarice, and corruption, are the deadliest foes to law and justice. In their presence, patriotism becomes unarmed, and truth looses her force and authority. In their presence ambition revels with ungovernable fury; public purity is contaminated, and private morals are defiled. Against this host of dangers, virtue must be presented; her votaries should stand forth, and give to her precepts all the efficacy, of which they are possessed. Nor must these laudable exertions be confined to the few. It is the bounden duty of every citizen, to promote the interests, advance the prosperity, and further the happiness of his country. Let us not, Gentlemen, deceive ourselves. Let us not mistake the hectic flush of disease, for the ruby glow of sanity. The *body politic* may be seriously affected. It becomes us, therefore, to probe the wound, to examine the complaint, and apply the remedy. Antiquity

possessed not half the light upon this subject as we do, and should we fail to profit by the lessons of experience, the fault will most assuredly rest upon our own heads. The time was, when every citizen of Greece was happy in the consciousness that he had a country to which he might address himself for protection, from which he might claim assistance as a matter of right, and for the defence of which he would have toiled and died. But that time has gone. The day of Grecian glory has passed by. Her poets have long since ceased to sing their strains of heroism and love. Her orators are mute and silent. With Demosthenes, as with the sons of Thebes, the glory of his country fell to rise no more, and the stranger who now visits her desolate ruins, is forced to shed the tear of sympathy and commisseration. As long as she was united, foreign and domestic foes were harmless; but no sooner did division and sectional jealousy creep in, than she became a prey to commotions, which shattered to atoms the fabric of her greatness and her glory. The gold of the wiley Macedonian hastened the catastrophe, and bribery became as common in the declining state of the Republic, as justice had been universal in its brightest days of prosperity. It was in vain that eloquence raised its solemn voice, it was in vain that the shades of the immortal dead were invoked, it was in vain that the patriotism of the heroes of Marathon and Salamis was held up to incite the citizen to a performance of his duty. The warning language of precaution was lost upon the ignoble descendents of Aristides; corruption and vice had seized upon the bowels of the state; avarice and luxury had made inroads fearful and astounding; the fate of republican Greece was sealed. She is now only known, as when she existed—the cradle of the arts and sciences, for like the country* whence she drew the origin of her fame and renown, she has been blotted from the catalogue of great nations. Athens, where a Socrates and a Plato reasoned on immortality, has been crushed, her specimens of genius and talent have fallen beneath the ravages of the barbarian; her monuments of splendour have been broken down, and like the Babylon of old, her temples will become the hiding places of reptiles and the den of wolves.

And where is Rome, the imperial city of the Cæsars? Where are her heroes and her patriots? where her temples and her fanes? where her poets and her orators? Unarmed by the influence of gold, her citizens bowed with an oriental devotion at the shrine of avarice, and

* Egypt.

bartered away, for perishable lucre, their privileges as men. The sturdy spirit of Roman liberty became extinguished: and with the immortal Cicero, it may be said, the freedom of his country was buried. Her triumphal arches have fallen. The exploits of her Africani and Cincinnati have been forgotten; and the famous sentiment, "*Sum civis Romanus*," has lost its magic influence and importance. The introduction of luxury and corruption from the East, wrought this wonderful change;† and the mistress of the world fell, disgraced and degraded, under the weight of her own crimes, vice, and iniquity.

Let us pause and consider. What has happened at one period, will, under similar circumstances, happen again. If Greece and Rome, of ancient, and Venice, of modern date, were brought to ignominious ends through the influence of faction and corruption, may not we, whose institutions are but their's remoddelled, be subjected to the same fate; and may not our Government be reduced to the same calamities? This is a question which every citizen should propose to himself, for at a season like the present, when our horizon is obscured by lowering clouds, consequences of a dark and inauspicious character are greatly to be apprehended. That many and aggravated evils are stalking forth barefaced in the land, corrupting the fountains of justice, and overleaping the barriers of the law, cannot be questioned. Our own experience would convince us of the fact. Some check must then be interposed. True wisdom dictates—patriotism demands it; and, believe me, no better could be devised than that which public opinion, based upon the grounds of harmony and reconciliation, can establish; for, as our government is a popular one, its success depends entirely upon the actions of the people, Wise decrees should be enacted—just laws should be passed—vice should be hooted down—virtue and education should be promoted; and the highest ambition of every American should be, not how his own private ends might be reached with the greatest emolument to himself, but how his country might be served—how her institutions might be protected, and how the example and precepts of our forefathers might be followed and practised in the spirit of true fidelity. As to our present condition, almost every prospect, in a national point of view, is cheering. The resources of our lands are inexhaustable—the spirit of our citizens is unconquerable—enterprise has annihilated space, and the most distant portions of the Union have been brought within a few days journey of each other

† See Tytler's Universal History.

What was said of Classic Greece by the sweetest poet that ever sung, may with propriety be applied to Republican America—yes,

"She'll be a watchword to the earth,
When man would do a deed of worth;
He'll point to her and turn to tread
So sanctioned, on the tyrant's head;
He'll look to her, and then rush on,
Where life is lost and freedom won."

There is one question, however, and but one, which can change the whole nature of things, and sever the bond by which the several members of our confederacy are united. That question is the abolition of slavery in the Southern States. The terrors of the tariff have passed away—the days of nullification have gone by, and no other cause of excitement exists but that which has been mentioned. A single glance at facts will convince us as to the nature of the point in dispute. Long before the Revolution broke out, domestic slavery had acquired a permanent footing in the British Colonies of North America. It had been introduced by foreigners; the crime of its existence, therefore, (if it be crime) cannot be chargeable to our ancestors. The slave population increased, and the utility and necessity of the institution were clearly perceived and admitted by all, when our Constitution was adopted. The framers of that celebrated instrument, seeing the difficulties which would arise from any action on their part, wisely determined to leave the question of emancipation with the States where slavery existed. This, they presumed, was the best possible step which could be taken, inasmuch as the property owned by citizens of the States could only be subjected to the jurisdiction of State legislation. Had a different line of conduct been pursued, there would have been established instantaneously, a point involving the powers of the General Government as head, and of the several States as members. This was plainly perceived by our wise and sagacious ancestors, and was prudently guarded against by them. When our Government went into practical operation, many of the States known at present as non-slave-holding, were slave-holding States. The decision of the question of abolition was one which rested with themselves. They have decided as best suited their inclination and policy, nor can they accuse others of having dictated to them while in the act of making that decision. It seems, however, that the golden maxim is to be disregarded in these days of genuine patriotism, A certain section of this Union is now to be dictated to—Congress is to be petitioned—inflammatory appeals are to be made, and for what? That the flame of civil discord may

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